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THE ORTHODOX WORD

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ST. NICODEMOS
THE PHILOKALIA

Daniel



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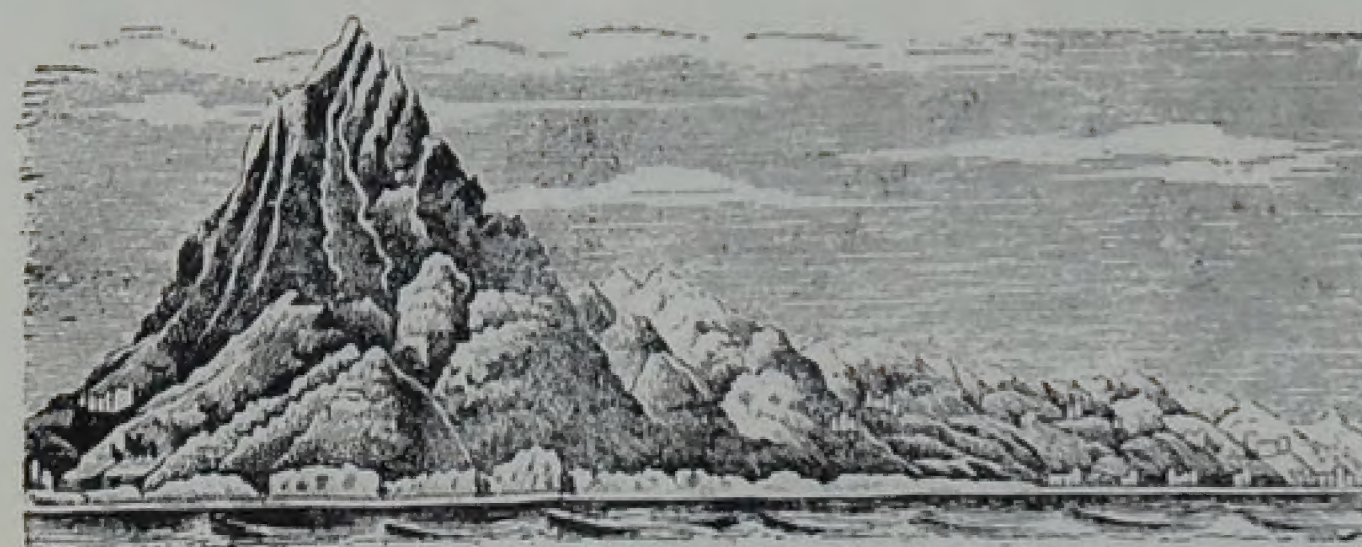
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MOUNT ATHOS

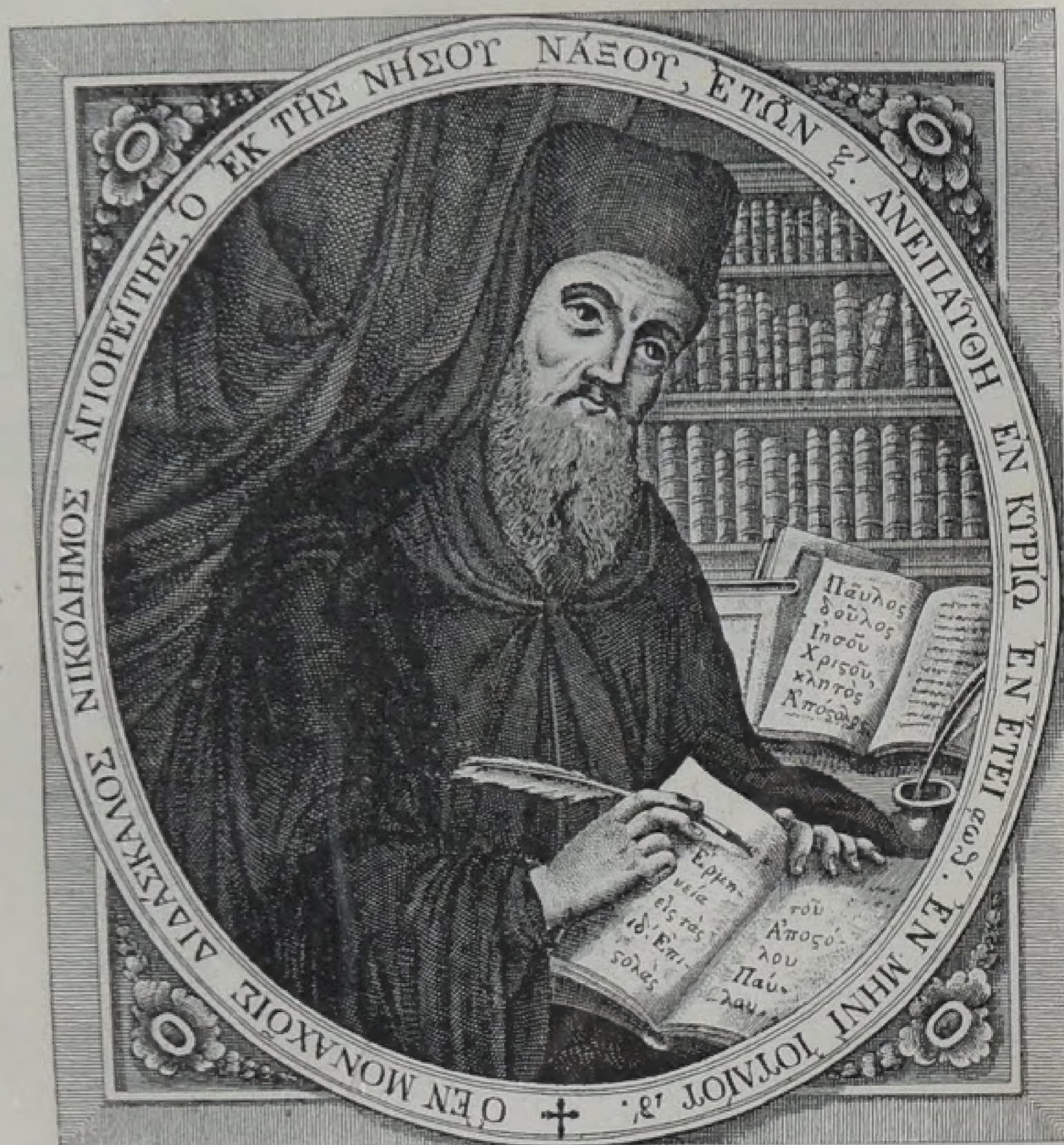
The noble brow of the Holy Mountain of Athos, where for a thousand years Orthodox monks of many nations have furnished numerous shining examples of the Orthodox spiritual life in practice, has itself become a standard and symbol of that spiritual life.

It has become a symbol, too, of faithfulness to the holy canons and traditions of the Orthodox Church. It was here that St. Nicodemus compiled the metaphorical *Rudder* of the Patristic canons that guide the ship of the Church on its stormy course through this world.

Our own age is a time of self-will and confusion that have spread from modern freethought into the Church of Christ herself, when even Orthodox hierarchs depart from the straight, narrow path of faithfulness to Holy Orthodoxy.

In such a time the spirit of Mt. Athos still speaks to Orthodox believers. To be Orthodox it is not enough to lead a "good" life, trusting to one's own judgement to determine what such a life is; it is not enough, even, to call oneself Orthodox, to believe the whole of Christian doctrine, and to profess fidelity to canonical Orthodoxy — if these are no more than words which one's actions belie.

There are laws of the spiritual life, and laws of religious practice as well as of doctrine. These are not the goals, but they are indispensable means to the goal of the Christian life. It is those who are faithful to these in spirit as well as letter, those who truly follow the guidance of this sure Rudder, who belong to the true Church of Christ, the ark of salvation.



ST. NICODEMOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN
1749-1809

By God's merciful Providence St. Nicodemus was sent to compile and publish for future generations some of the basic sources of Orthodox faith. For the holiness of his own life he was canonized by the Greek Church in 1955. The author of this article is a young Greek theologian, a graduate of the Theological School of the University of Athens; he is a spiritual son of Fr. Theokletos of Mt. Athos, who has written the authoritative work on the Saint.

ST. NICODEMOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

By JOHN MAVROS



CONTEMPORARY STUDENT of the life of our father Saint Nicodemus writes: "When the time comes to undertake the biography, *i. e.*, the exposition of the inner life, of a holy Father of the Church, then we are imperceptibly filled with fright and compunction, fear and humility..." Being, however, in a position to offer our talents, and fearing lest we be condemned as indolent if we neglect to do so, we shall try to the best of our ability to write the Life of that giant of mental prayer and diamond of Orthodox faith, Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain.

I. HIS LIFE

The divine Father was born on the island of Naxos, in Greece, in the year 1749. During his youth he finished the famous Evangelical School of Smyrna, where he shone and astonished all by his talents. At the age of about 27 he came to Mt. Athos, where, at first, he stayed for two years at the Monastery of St. Dionysios; born Nicholas, he received the name of Nicodemus when he became a monk. The divine Father was striving in this monastery to wage the good fight in accordance with the life and practice of Christ, when he heard of the fame of the virtue of *Abbot Paissy Velichkovsky*, the Russian, who was at that time in Bogdania (now Roumania). Abbot Paissy had under his guidance over a thousand brothers, whom he taught the science of mental prayer; Nicodemus, being an ardent lover of that deifying prayer, decided to go there. The boat on which he sailed from Athos, however, was overcome by a violent storm at sea and only with difficulty was brought to port at the island of Thasos. There the Saint changed his mind about the trip to Bogdania and decided to return to Athos -- not, however, to the

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Monastery of St. Dionysios, but to a cell at the Skete of Pantokratoros. After a time the virtuous monk Arsenios of Peloponnesos came to live at the same cell; the Saint entered into obedience to him and found in him his first teacher of mental prayer.

In 1782 Arsenios came to the desert islet of Skyropoula, about 150 miles from Athos, to live, and the Saint followed him there; but after a year they separated, and Nicodemos returned to his beloved Athos to stay until his death. While on Skyropoula he wrote, without help from any source, the *Handbook of Counsel*, which is filled with Divine wisdom, teaching the path to purification of the heart. This book he sent to his cousin Ierotheos, Bishop of Halkis in Greece, who had many times asked the Saint to send him advice for the profit of his soul. It was here that the Saint undertook the struggle of writing, and began his ascetic wrestling; it is impossible to keep account of his fatigue and sweat in the labors which enabled him to beautify his soul and capture in his books the fragrance of the Holy Spirit.

Until his blessed death, St. Nicodemos changed his abode many times--showing, indeed, in this very point his greatness; for he followed the Spirit and not the letter, caring always only how to find Christ the more safely. He was named *Aghioritis*, "of the Holy Mountain", indicating that he belonged to the whole of Mt. Athos.

Coming to the last period of his earthly life, and feeling himself enfeebled, he went to live with his beloved brothers in Christ, the brothers Skourtaious, who had published many of his theological works; they had a cell in the vicinity of Karyes, the capital of Mt. Athos. Here he gladly accepted their services, his constitution having been completely exhausted from spiritual exercises, and all of his teeth having fallen out.

And so, as Efthymios, his first biographer, says of his death, "When the sun rose on the earth that day (July 14, 1809), the intelligible sun of the Church of Christ set. The pillar which guided the New Israel of grace disappeared; the cloud which freshened all those languishing in prison and burning in the heat of sin, hid itself." His many friends and acquaintances mourned. Someone, even an uneducated man, has said, "Oh, my fathers, may a thousand common Christians have died today, and not Nicodemos..."

Now his holy head is in the cell of the Skourtaious brothers in Karyes, pouring out the grace of the Holy Spirit that sanctified him.

ST. NICODEMOS

II. HIS WRITINGS AND IDEAS

The first inspiration for writing was given to the Saint by the Bishop of Corinth, St. Makarios Notaras. St. Nicodemos, while still a layman, had gone to see him on the island of Hydra with the intention of drawing profit from his illustrious virtue. From that meeting a holy tie of love was created between the two men, leading St. Makarios in 1777 to the Holy Mountain to see St. Nikodemos. Remaining in Karyes, he called St. Nikodemos from his monastery to urge him to undertake the work of making corrections and additions to the famous unpublished books, *Philokalia*,¹ *Evergetinos*,² and *On Frequent Holy Communion*. To the *Philokalia* the Saint added a theological introduction and a brief biography of each saint whose writings are included in the work. After a few months St. Makarios took these works with him to publish them.

In 1782 St. Nicodemos wrote the admirable *Handbook of Counsel* on the islet of Skyropoula. In 1784, at the suggestion of St. Makarios, who had come for a second time to the Holy Mountain, he corrected and prepared for publishing the *Complete Works of St. Simeon the New Theologian* as well as the book, *How to Make Confession*. After a time there followed the *Theotokarion*,³ *Unseen Warfare*, *New Martyrology*,⁴ and *Spiritual Exercises*.

St. Nicodemos, together with St. Makarios Notaras, Archimandrite Athanasios Parios, and other devout monks of Mt. Athos, were known as the *Kollybades*. This name, derived from the *kolleva* or rice eaten in memory of the dead, was applied to them by their enemies because of their strictness in observing the holy canon that requires requiem services to be performed on Saturdays and not on Sundays. They also advocated frequent Holy Communion and devoted love to the Tradition of the Orthodox Church.

It was one of these *Kollybades*, Archimandrite Athanasios Parios, who persuaded St. Nicodemos to undertake a work on St. Gregory Palamas. The manuscript of this work, in three volumes, was sent to Vienna for printing; but there, most unfortunately, it was seized and destroyed by the Austrian authorities, who mistook it for a proclama-

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tion on Greek independence. This event caused the Saint great sadness.

Later, with the aid of Hieromonk Agapios, he compiled the *Pedalion* or *Rudder*,¹ which he sent to be printed by Archimandrite Theodoritos at Venice. New woe, however, awaited him in connection with this book. Theodoritos altered the interpretations and notes of the Saint by adding and subtracting material, introducing his own heretical ideas. This caused the Saint to say to his beloved brother Skourtaios that it would have been better to have plunged a knife into his heart than for Theodoritos to have added or subtracted anything from his book.

After a short rest followed the composition of the *Christoithia*,² commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul, the General Epistles, and the Psalter, and a commentary on the Nine Odes at the end of the Psalter which he named the *Garden of Graces*. In the last year of his life he wrote the gigantic works, the *Great Synaxaristis*,³ *Eortodromion*,⁴ and *The New Ladder*,⁵ which, together with the *Rudder*, are the most theological of St. Nicodemos' works.

Finally, to combat his enemies, he wrote a *Confession of Faith*, stating his belief in the Orthodoxy of the Holy Fathers. Concerning this battle with his enemies at the end of his life, Prof. Hodges writes in an introduction to the English translation of *Unseen Warfare*.

"He appealed to the Synaxis, the governing body of Mt. Athos, and was triumphantly vindicated (19th of May, 1807). In a public statement the Synaxis declared that his writings contained no trace of heresy, and called upon the whole community to recognize him as 'most devout and most Orthodox.' This verdict of his own community has been recognized as just by the whole Orthodox world. Nicodemos stands today as a pillar of Orthodoxy, and the *Unseen Warfare* is not the least of his gifts to the Orthodox Church."

All fields of theological investigation are covered in the writings of St. Nicodemos. Indeed, it is very difficult to find a saint in the whole history of the Orthodox Church who so perfectly united in himself the broadest mundane and theological culture with the science of mental prayer and with holy tranquillity. A Catholic theologian writing on St.

1. The official collection of the canons of the Ecumenical and other Orthodox Councils, and of the Holy Fathers, with extensive commentary by St. Nicodemos.

2. A practical manual of the Christian life.

3. Lives of the Saints.

4. Interpretation of the texts to the services of the Twelve Great Feasts.

5. A theological explanation of the *Strepenni* of Sunday Matins, in each of the eight tones.

ST. NICODEMOS

Nicodemos states: "He was a canonologist, a liturgist, a hagiographer, an ascetic writer, a publisher of books and a prolific author, and without doubt a most diligent monk, in whom after many centuries the Greek Church again has cause to be praised." This Catholic writer, it would seem, repeating an error common in the West, does not recognize any Orthodox saints or erudites before St. Nicodemos. There was, however, an abundance of them, perhaps not with the exact spirit of St. Nicodemos, but noted for their many miracles and their holy lives, including very many martyrs for the Orthodox Faith.

Everything in the thought of St. Nicodemos is Biblical and Patristic. He had no love for "Thomism" in theology, finding it to be "philosophical" rather than philosophical¹ in the Christian sense.

In his own ideas the Saint was an uncompromising and devout zealot. On the question of Christian perfection, for example, which he examines in *Unseen Warfare*, he inquires whether it is to be found in prostrations, in prayer, in charity, or in vigils, and he answers thus: it is not to be found in these, but they are tools which guide one to perfection. Further, "Now you must also learn that it consists in nothing else but coming near to God and union with Him... With this is connected a heartfelt realization of the goodness and greatness of God, together with consciousness of our own nothingness and our proneness to every evil; love of God and dislike of ourselves; submission not only to God but also to all creatures, for the sake of our love of God..."

He believed the Roman Catholic Church to be totally deprived of grace and even of valid baptism; and Father Theokletos notes that the Saint indites the Pope as one who "suffers from the illness of Lucifer, accusing him also of leading people into destruction." We may quote here the opinion of the Saint himself on the Catholics:

"Enough was said concerning them by St. Mark of Ephesus in Florence (at the 25th general assembly of the Council of Florence), when he stated frankly: We have cut the Latins off from us for no other reason than the fact that they are not only schismatics but also heretics"; and the holy Father concludes, "wherefore we must not even think of uniting with them."

St. Nicodemos emphasized the necessity for keeping all four of the fasts prescribed by the Church, and not the Great Lent alone; the Latins, discarding the traditions of the Fathers, ignore the ancient fasts of Ad-

1. "Philosopher": lover of wisdom; "philozopher": lover of darkness.

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vent, of the Holy Apostles (in June), and of the Mother of God (in August), and in addition have become such "slaves of their bellies," as St. Nicodemos calls them, that even when they do fast it is not at all with the severity prescribed by the canons.

The Saint spoke also of the garments and general appearance of the clergy, reserving special scorn for the shaved Latin priests -- who have been imitated, unfortunately, by many Orthodox priests in our own day. "Note that the present Canon (No. 96 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council) censures the priests of the Latins who shave off their beard and moustache, and who look like very young men and handsome bridegrooms and have the face of women... Oh, and what a most ugly and most disgusting sight it is to see the successor of St. Peter close-shaven, as the Greeks say, like a 'fine bridegroom,' with this difference, however, that he wears a stole and a pallium and sits in the chief seat..."

What the Saint would have thought of the so-called "World Council of Churches" may be seen in his judgement regarding those who join in prayer with heretics. "The present Canon (No. 45 of the Holy Apostles) prescribes that any bishop or presbyter or deacon that shall only join in prayer, and not co-officiate in Divine services, with any heretics is to be suspended, or temporarily deprived of the right to celebrate the sacraments. For anyone who prays in company with excommunicants (as heretics are), must himself be excommunicated along with them, according to the tenth Canon of the same Apostles."

All of the works of St. Nicodemos were inspired by love of his brothers, especially those of little education; it was for their sake that he translated the enormous Patristic treasures that are to be found in his works. He writes of this in the preface to the *Pedalion*. "For, tell me, what benefit can a simple person get from reading a book solely in ancient Greek? Will not the one who wrote the book appear to him a barbarian, and, conversely, will he not appear to its author a barbarian? Will not the two of them together be talking emptily?"

May the prayers of St. Nicodemos enlighten the souls of the shepherds of Christ's Church, enabling us all to be her faithful children as well as imitators of the lives of the Holy Fathers and Martyrs, for the sake of the Truth. Amen.

THE PHILOKALIA

FROM ANCIENT TIMES, ever since the Mother of God took it under Her protection, the Holy Mountain of Athos has been a citadel and abundant source of Orthodox spirituality. One of the forms by which this "Living Water" has been transmitted into many lands and hearts thirsty for God's Truth is an old compilation of excerpts from the ascetic writings of the Holy Fathers, under the general title of "Love of the Good" -- *Philokalia* in Greek, *Dobrotoliubie* in Slavonic and Russian.

The first printed edition of the *Philokalia* appeared at a crucial time. With the French Revolution the flood of atheism set out on its course throughout the world, and subsequently every nation was found to be more or less receptive to it. As against this the works of St. Nicodemos set forth the true Christian spiritual life for those who, in the new age of universal apostasy, wished to be conscious, mindful Christians. At the same time another Athonite, Starets Paisy Velichkovsky, then in Moldavia, was living this same spiritual life in the tradition of the Holy Fathers, and translating the *Philokalia* into Slavonic; his followers were responsible for the 19th-century spiritual revival in Russia. It is the complementary labors of St. Nicodemos and Starets Paisy that have made the riches of Orthodox spirituality available to the God-seekers of modern times.

The *Philokalia* is both a guide to spiritual purification and a source of spiritual inspiration, for its authors are the God-bearing Fathers, the *righteous* who *live forever*. The effect of these God-inspired writings on a receptive heart may be seen in the confession of the monk John of Moldavia, one of the students of Starets Paisy, given in reply to the earnest entreaty of a monk-pilgrim.¹

"...And I fell to his feet and with tears began to say: 'Oh, holy Father, forgive me a sinner, tell me and hide nothing from me about the mysteries of your silence; what kind of fruits has it brought you, with what gifts has our Lord rewarded you?' Hearing this, he was filled with tears, and said: 'What you are asking me, my child, is it not beyond

1. *Travels in Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land* by Monk Partheny the Athonite, in 4 parts, Moscow, 1855.

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me? Ask me no more about it now, but go, God with you, to the Holy Mountain of Athos and strive to cleanse your inward man by prayer; and when your heart will be wounded with love of Christ, then you will understand yourself what grace it is to be with God.' But I implored him to tell me at least some small thing.

"In tears he told me: 'Well, then, listen to me a sinner; I'll reveal a secret to you, but keep it such as long as I am alive. I'll open a part of my riches to you; and do not conceal it, but, when the time comes, share it with others. Listen: When I arrived at Nyamets Monastery, I heard from Starets Paissy about mental prayer and I questioned him how to begin using it. And I began experiencing it in practice. And it seemed so sweet to me that I came to love it more than anything in the world! And because of it I fled from the brothers, loved silence, often went off by myself to deserted places, fled from all temptations, especially from idle talk. For its sake I twice travelled to the Holy Mountain, exhausted myself with obedience, toil, fasting, prostrations, and all-night vigils -- all in order to acquire unceasing mental prayer. For its sake I would often shut myself up in my cell and use up all my strength on it, even to the point of absolute exhaustion. And when I had spent many years in this way, the prayer little by little began to take root in me. Later, when we were living in the skete of the Protection, the Lord visited me because of the prayers of Fr. Platon.¹ My heart was touched by indescribable joy, and the prayer began to act; and so much sweetness it gave me that it would not allow me even to sleep. I would sleep for an hour a day -- and that sitting -- and then get up again as if I had never slept; and even when I slept, my heart kept vigil. And then the prayer started to produce fruits. In truth, my son, the Kingdom of Heaven is within us! There are no words to describe the love for all that was born within me, and the tears -- if I wished, I could weep without ceasing. And so sweet did the Holy Scriptures become for me, especially the Gospels and the Psalter, that there was no end to my enjoyment, and every word threw me into astonishment and made me weep much. O Lord! *Thou hast manifested to me the secret and hidden things of Thy wisdom* (Ps. 50: 6). Often I get up in the evening and read the Psalter or the Jesus Prayer, and I am in rapture, beside myself, not knowing where I am -- whether in the body or outside the body, I do not know, God knows; only when I come to myself, it is already dawn.'"

1. A close disciple and the first biographer of Starets Paissy.

SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT AND THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS OF RUSSIA

By I. M. KONTZEVICH

Saint John was sent by God like the great prophets of the Old Testament, a righteous accuser, warning of the approaching fall of the Orthodox Empire and the end of the world, calling to repentance. This is the second and final part of an article¹ examining Saint John and the epoch in which he lived.

II

THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF SAINT JOHN

How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
St. Matt. 23: 37

THE 19TH CENTURY and the beginning of the 20th saw more than the flowering of monastic asceticism; it was an epoch of rebirth in every area of Russian life. In Church art, after a period of decadence, could be observed a turn to fine ancient examples. The higher ecclesiastical schools freed themselves from foreign, non-Orthodox influences and entered upon an independent path. An independent theological science was established. Thanks to a series of Orthodox emperors, there was restored the canonical function of the monarch as the true son of the Church and the guardian of Orthodoxy. The Synodal organization of the Church introduced by Peter the Great was destined to end, and the course was set toward restoration of the Patriarchate. In everything an upward movement could be felt. Russia was heading with rapid steps toward a blossoming of culture, toward the peak of her fortune, power, and glory.

But simultaneously with the creative, constructive forces there was a development of centrifugal, destructive forces. The overwhelming

1. From the *Jubilee Anthology (1908-1958)* published by The Memorial Fund of St. John of Kronstadt, Utica, New York. Copyright 1958; translated with permission (somewhat abridged). The first part appeared in vol. 1, no. 2, of *The Orthodox Word*.

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majority of Russian society was infected by that pernicious atheistic, revolutionary spirit, coming to us from the West, which was so brilliantly depicted in Dostoyevsky's *Possessed* (*The Demons*). Together with atheism, moral decay was rapidly spreading. Even some of those who were on the side of the destructive forces sensed at times the dead-end to which the leftist intelligentsia had come, taking the whole of Russia with them.

A vivid description of what was happening in Russia at the end of the last century was made in 1901 in the magazine *The Pilot* by the remarkable contemporary of Fr. John, Archbishop Amvrossy of Kharkov (1820-1901), in a whole series of essays written with presentiment of his imminent death, which indeed soon followed.

"What can one say of our so-called light literature," said this starets and archpastor, "which is so eagerly spread among the people? It is the vehicle of light-minded and talentless works which pervert the people's taste and disaccustom them from serious spiritual reading.

"And what does our educated society have to offer, they who so love to make free and self-confident judgements concerning every question and contemporary event? --- Nothing but a market-place, where every kind of cheap liberal idea and opinion is offered and exchanged... Someone must open the eyes of these careless and blinded people, *who are going to their destruction and drawing after them a great people!*

"I am an old man, over eighty... I have seen with my own eyes all the reforms of the past century, both the fortunate and the unsuccessful... I have seen the rapid change in popular morals and am amazed how these thinking people of ours do not notice the decline of our people from that firm intellectual and moral peak on which our ancestors stood, do not see how we are being robbed of our spiritual powers, how the purity and order of our family life and our simplicity and modesty of manners are being lost.... Our higher and leading classes are nourished by a spirit of unbelief and renunciation of the teaching of Christ. They are being lost for the Church and are breaking away from the millions of Orthodox people, for whom we should be leaders. By their unbelief and liberalism they infect the half-educated clerks, merchants, shopmen, all the way down to the district scribes."

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (1783-1867) likewise foresaw, long in advance, the terrible future of Russia. Bishop Leonid Krasnopevtsev relates this in his memoirs. "Once," he writes, "the Metropolitan



Courtesy of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y.

SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT
1829-1908

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said to me that he felt that the future was covered with dark clouds, and that when the storm broke the people would be so deeply shaken by its blows that they would forget all that had preceded the storm." Two months before his death he told the Rector of the Sergieva Lavra that he saw in the future "a terrible storm that will come to us from the West."

The approaching downfall and its causes were seen also by an elder contemporary of Fr. John -- Bp. Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894); still in the sixties and seventies of the last century he said: "They have sunk in the Western mire up to the ears, and they think: all is well!... In a generation, perhaps in two, our Orthodoxy will evaporate... Why did the French come to us (in 1812)? God sent them to uproot the evil which we had also learned from them... Such is the law of God's justice: one is healed of sin by that which attracted one to it."

Even earlier warnings about the Divine chastisement that was moving upon Russia were given by our great ascetics and saints, such as St. Seraphim of Sarov, Fr. Illiodor of the Glinskaya hermitage, who had a well-known vision of the approaching fate of Russia, and also the Startsi of Optina, among others. Our great writers and thinkers, such as Dostoyevsky, also foresaw and spoke of this; as did K. N. Leontiev, who clearly pointed out the causes of the fall; and even before any of these there were the forebodings of I. Kireyevsky.

Among the contemporaries of Fr. John many saw and spoke about the downfall and fought against it, but louder than any other resounded the accusing and prophetic voice of Fr. John. He bore on himself the whole weight of the prophetic office.

An attack of malice and hatred was launched against Fr. John with exceptional force in the days of the first revolution (1905), when he openly and sharply stood up against it and broke off with the leading society. Insults and physical threats against him went so far that Fr. John was in constant danger. A society was formed for his defense, under the presidency of Metrop. Makary of Moscow. At that time a whole constellation of "leading" writers mocked the Church and the government, striving to outdo each other in their blasphemies and mockery. But Lev Tolstoy surpassed them all. Here is what Fr. John had to say of him: "Look at these insolent revilers today: Tolstoy and all his adherents and followers, real antichrists, liars, according to the Apostle

SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT

John: *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son* (I John 2: 22).

Turning to the learned, Fr. John threatened them prophetically: "From the elevation of your platforms you are disdainful of the Lord God, His Word, not noticing that your perdition does not sleep. The Lord will scatter you. He will scatter you in such a way that no one will even know where your bones lie."

In entreaty Fr. John turned to the Russian people: "Learn, O Russia, to believe in the God Almighty Who rules the world by His decrees, and learn from your holy forefathers faith, wisdom, and courage." "The Lord has entrusted us, Russians, with the great, saving gift of Orthodox faith... Arise, O Russian man!... Who has taught you disobedience and insane rebellion, such as never were in Russia?"

"...What will finally come of the disorder that exists in our lives? Lawlessness spreads over the earth; the kingdom of the enemy extends itself, while Thy Kingdom diminishes; few are Thy chosen ones, in whose hearts Thou dwellest, while many are the slaves of the devil, in whose hearts, like a thief, the immemorial killer of men takes his seat. What art Thou doing with us, O Lord? The blood of Thy Testament cries out from the earth, but Thy evangelical voice does not penetrate to the hearts of Christians. Thy Commandments are neglected, the Church statutes are trampled underfoot -- what hast Thou done with us, O Lord?"

In 1907, when everything was completely calm in Russia, Fr. John, seeing the general unfeelingness and lack of repentance, penetrated with prophetic vision to the imminent suffering of the Russian people; and the holy Starets, weighed down by severe infirmities, being himself at the edge of the grave, prophesied sternly many times in church, and in a transport of ardent compassion he no longer spoke, but shouted, raising his hands high: "Repent: a terrible time is at hand, such as you cannot even imagine!" "The impression was striking; terror took possession of those who were present, and the church resounded with weeping and wailing. My wife and I" -- says Sursky¹ -- "were perplexed: what would it be? War? Earthquake? Flood? By the power of the Prophet's words, however, we understood that it would be something much more

1. I. K. Sursky, *Father John of Kronstadt*, Belgrade, 1938, 2 vols.

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terrible, and the supposition occurred to me that the earth's axis was about to shift."

"The people of the world before the Flood" -- said Fr. John -- "were given 120 years for repentance, and they were warned that for their sins there would be chastisement from God -- the Flood. Time passed, and people became depraved; they did not think of repentance and did not believe the preacher of repentance, the righteous Noah -- and the word of God was fulfilled exactly. The Hebrews did not believe the Prophets, who said that they would be taken captive by the Babylonian king; and so they continued to worship idols -- and went into captivity, and Jerusalem was laid waste, and all its wealth passed over to Babylon. The Jews of the time of Jesus Christ did not believe in Christ as Messiah and put Him to death on the Cross, and the prophecy of Christ about Jerusalem was soon fulfilled, the Romans exterminating the Jews without mercy.

"So, today also, the people have lost their senses; they do not listen to the lamentation of the Church, they say -- it is all fairy-tales, the priests deceive us for their own profit.

"O blind men, O stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, do you not see before your very eyes the events foretold by the Gospel and now being accomplished? Here is internecine war, famine, plagues. Will you not believe in Divine Justice even now? Know, then, that judgement is at the doors and that the Lord is soon coming in glory to judge the living and the dead!" (II Tim. 4: 1.)

As in antiquity the Lord sent prophets to call to repentance, so now also, in the age of the Russian people's apostasy from God, a great prophet was sent to them, and he confirmed his foreknowledge of the coming Divine chastisement by innumerable examples of clairvoyance and by miracles. But the Russian people did not listen to the Prophet's call, and thus its fate became inevitable.

The path to the rebirth of Russia, as also to the personal salvation of each of us, was pointed out by Fr. John; and this is the only path, there is no other.

ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT

EPILOGUE

...And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
St. Matt. 13: 15; Is. 6: 10

As has already been said, Fr. John stepped forward openly against the Revolution, in defense of faith and throne. As is well known, he solemnly blessed the banners and standards of the Russian People's Union and became an honorary member of it.

In a book about Fr. John the words of Archpriest Sergy Chetverikov are cited, where, speaking of these "faults" of Fr. John, he continues: "But all these 'faults' of Fr. John, if such they be, do not in the least darken his pure and attractive spiritual face." And then Fr. Chetverikov condescendingly forgives these "faults": "In one's appraisal of Fr. John one must stand above all these external and accidental sides of his life."

Thus, in the eyes of Fr. Chetverikov, the whole prophetic office of Fr. John is no more than an "external and accidental side of his life." Here Fr. Chetverikov appears as a representative of leftist society and expresses its sympathetic attitude toward the Revolution.

A man of leftist convictions by the very orientation of his soul cannot penetrate to the essence of sanctity. The state of grace of a God-inspired prophet, who sees all in a true light and speaks nothing of his own, but only what God inspires in him -- is closed to the understanding of such a man.

The prophecy of Fr. John has been fulfilled exactly, but *their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

The rebirth of Russia is possible only through repentance; stubborn persistence in the sin of revolution will prevent our return to the homeland.

THE PROPHETS OF GOD RAISE THE DEAD

The preaching of God's great prophets
is confirmed by the testimony of their miracles.

And Elisha went into the house, and behold, the dead child was laid upon his bed. And Elisha went in, and shut the door upon themselves, the two, and prayed to the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and bowed himself upon him, and the flesh of the child grew warm... And he bowed himself on the child seven times; and the child opened his eyes... And Elisha said, take thy son. And the woman went in, and fell at his feet, and did obeisance bowing to the ground; and she took her son, and went out. (IV Kings 4:32-37)

The wife of O., while preparing to bear her fourth or fifth child, was taken severely ill. Her doctors determined that the foetus had died and that a Caesarean section was required to remove it. But first the family sent a telegram to Fr. John of Kronstadt, whom they knew. Fr. John replied: "Leaving immediately, praying to God. John Sergiev."

"The next day about noon he entered the O. apartment, where by that time a whole crowd of relatives and friends had gathered. 'Where is Liza?' Fr. John asked, entering the drawing-room with his customary rapid gait. 'Take me to her, and all of you remain here quietly.'

"Fr. John entered the adjoining bedroom and closed the heavy doors after him. Minutes passed, that seemed like half-hours. In the drawing-room it was as quiet as a burial vault. And suddenly the bedroom doors were flung open with a loud noise. In the doorway stood a gray-haired old man in a priest's cassock, over which he had on an old stole, with a thin, dishevelled gray beard, with an extraordinary face that was red from the intense effort he had exerted at prayer and covered with great drops of sweat. And suddenly there almost thundered from Fr. John fearful, terrible words, words that came from another world. 'The Lord God has been pleased to work a miracle! He has been pleased to resurrect a dead child in the womb! Liza will bear a son!...'

"'It's incomprehensible!' said, excitedly, one of the doctors who had come for the operation, just two hours after Fr. John had left. 'The foetus is alive... I don't understand a thing about it, not a thing... I affirmed and affirm now that the foetus was dead and that blood-poisoning began long ago.' The other doctors understood no more.

"The same night Mrs. O. was successfully and quickly delivered of a perfectly healthy boy."

Eugene Vadimov (Sursky, op. cit., pp. 244-6).

MARTYROLOGY OF THE COMMUNIST YOKE

THE SIXTY PRIEST-MARTYRS¹

IN 1930, 1931, AND 1932 I travelled through the whole of Siberia on a scientific expedition -- writes a witness -- and in 1933 our travels took us to Irkutsk, Nizhne-udinsk, and Balagansk.

The city of Kachug is on the bank of the Lena River, 140 miles from Irkutsk. There was a road from Kachug to Nizhne-udinsk and Balagansk. The road was completely in the taiga; there were no inhabitants, and only prisoners worked on the construction. In the camps around Kachug at that time there reigned an unheard-of tyranny. For no reason at all people were shot, beaten, flogged. Living conditions were terrible; there were sixty to eighty people in a barracks, with two tiers of boards for sleeping. In case one of the prisoners didn't fulfill his daily assignment, the camp guards had the right to do what they wanted with him; they held prisoners on trial for a week in the open air. People were dying of hunger and cold.

From Irkutsk to Nizhne-udinsk we travelled by the steamship *Buryat*. From Nizhne-udinsk we travelled by horse-cart along the Kachug road, going over seventy miles from the right bank of the Ager River in the direction of Kachug. During this time I was working as hydro-meter observer.

From the 8th to the 22nd of July, 1933, our exploration party stopped for several days not far from a concentration camp. In that region the soil was better suited to agriculture, and there were already plans for a State collective farm there. The weather had become quite pleasant. After dinner we sat until late at night by the bonfire. We often heard some kind of cries, which echoed through the taiga. We didn't know yet what kind of cries these were.

It was a clear, quiet night; the fresh Siberian air was giving off a fragrant aroma of taiga flowers along the valley. And as long as I live I will never forget this valley, I will remember it always! Our sweet morning sleep was interrupted by a kind of mournful human moan. We all got up quickly. The head of our party, a native of Irkutsk, quickly

1. Archpriest Michael Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, Jordanville, N. Y., vol. II, pp. 214-6.

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took up a pair of binoculars, others set up two levelling-instruments, and we were looking after our work, when we began to observe a crowd moving in our direction; because of the undergrowth it was difficult to understand what was going on.

It was sixty prisoners, and as they got closer we could see clearly that they were all wasted from starvation and overwork. What did we see? Each of them had a rope on his shoulders. They were dragging a sleigh -- a sleigh in the month of July! And on the sleigh was a barrel with human excrement!

The guards who accompanied them apparently did not know that there was a scientific expedition on the territory of the concentration camp. We heard the precise words of the guards' command: "Lie down and don't move." One of the guards ran back to the camp; apparently they considered us suspicious. One of our party somehow quickly determined the situation of the prisoners and said: "We've prolonged their lives a few minutes." At first we didn't understand these words. In perhaps 15 or 20 minutes we were surrounded by a platoon of camp guards, who approached holding rifles battle-ready, as if they were about to attack with bayonets. The platoon commander and the political commissar came up to us and asked for our documents. After verifying the documents they explained to us that these sixty men had been sentenced to be shot as an element foreign to the Soviet power.

Already a ditch had been prepared for these sixty. The political commissar asked us to go into our tents, which we did. The sixty martyrs were priests. In the quiet July morning the weak voices of many of the priests were clearly audible. One of the executioners asked the priests standing by the ditch, one by one: "You're taking your last breath; tell us, is there a God or not?" The reply of the holy martyrs was firm and confident: "Yes, there is a God!"

The first shot rang out. Sitting in the tents, our hearts pounded. ... A second shot rang out, a third, and more. The priests were led up, one by one, to the ditch; the executioners standing by the ditch asked each priest -- Is there a God? The answer was the same: Yes, there is a God! We are living witnesses, we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears how people before death confessed their faith in God.

Perhaps years will yet pass, decades, but this grave on the Kachug-Nizhne-udinsk road must be found. No Orthodox Christian anywhere must forget these holy martyrs, who gave their lives for their faith.

ARCHIMANDRITE SEBASTIAN DABOVICH

AND THE ORTHODOX MISSION TO AMERICA

THE VERY PRESENCE of Orthodoxy in America has a missionary purpose. Orthodoxy is not the national religion of a few peoples, but the true Church of Christ, and as such meant to be preached to all peoples. Unfortunately, the Orthodox mission is sometimes confused today with mere publicity, as though it were sufficient to make Orthodoxy "better known" to Americans, or to gain recognition for the Church as a "fourth major faith"; and too often the words and deeds, and the very appearance, of Orthodox clergy betray less a sense of the Orthodox mission to preach the one saving Truth, than a simple desire to adapt oneself to the pluralist temper of American society.

Few Orthodox Americans are perhaps aware of the promising beginning of the Orthodox mission in the 18th and 19th centuries, when a serious attempt was undertaken to make the riches of Holy Orthodoxy accessible to Americans. One of the most notable examples--and results--of this missionary endeavor was the life and writings of Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich. Born in 1863 in San Francisco of Serbian parents, he was the first native American to become a priest and monk in the Orthodox Church. Fluent in Russian, Serbian, and English, he preached the Gospel in all three languages. He is remembered fondly by many Serbs as the founder and inspirer of many Serbian parishes. In the English language he preached sermons and gave lectures, a number of which he published, together with independent essays, translations, and expositions of the Orthodox Faith. In these he took as his motto a phrase Orthodox missionaries today might well heed: *speaking the truth in love* (Eph. 4: 15). Without judging those outside the Church, and showing every kindness to them in his relations with them, he nonetheless preached the truth without compromise, condemning all liberalism and indifference in religious matters as "foul treachery" to God's Truth, proceeding from a lack of faith and conviction.

The following¹ is the first of a number of his essays, now long out of print, that will appear in the pages of *The Orthodox Word*.

1. From *Lectures and Sermons by a Priest of the Holy Orthodox Church*, San Francisco, 1899.

THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

By ARCHIMANDRITE SEBASTIAN DABOVICH

WHAT IS THE ORTHODOX CHURCH? The Orthodox Church is a body or community of people who, 1: correctly believe in Divine Revelation; and, 2: who obey a lawful hierarchy instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, through the Holy Apostles. In order to belong to the Orthodox Church two principal conditions are required: First, to accurately accept, rightly understand, and truthfully confess the Divine teaching of faith; and secondly, to acknowledge the lawful hierarchy or priesthood, to receive from it the Holy Mysteries or Sacraments, and generally to follow its precepts in matters concerning salvation.

Let us now consider the question regarding the true and divine doctrine of holy faith.

The divine teaching of our holy religion is contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments, and in Holy Tradition. The principal dogmas are laid down briefly in the Creed, which commences with these words: "I believe in one God, the Father," and which was compiled by the Holy Fathers of the first two Universal Councils in the fourth century. The moral truths of the Orthodox Faith are contained chiefly in the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai, which were completed and explained by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel and especially in the Lord's Sermon on the Mount.

The doctrine that does not agree with the true understanding of Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition which is preserved in the Orthodox Catholic Church from the Apostle's time, is termed heresy; translated from the Greek language this word signifies separation. Certainly it is to be understood that such who separate or draw others away from the body of the Church by false teaching, thereby excommunicate themselves from her fold.

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Heresy, or injury to the teaching of Christ, began as early as the times of the Apostles. St. Paul wrote to Titus, who was bishop on the island of Crete: *A man that is a heretic after a first and second admonition refuse, knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned* (Titus 3: 10 11). The holy Apostle wrote to the Corinthian Christians thus: *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you* (I Cor. 11: 19). The bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, endeavored from the earliest times to transmit accurately the teaching of Christ, which they received from the Apostles. Thus our faith was carefully, even to the letter, transmitted by Tradition. It is plainly understood how Holy Tradition became a channel by which truths were conveyed to rising generations, as the first bishops received the word and also necessary instructions from the Apostles, not only in writing, but also orally, face to face; therefore it is clear that this Apostolic Tradition was in itself an explanation of the Holy Scriptures and, as it were, a supplement.

In regard to holy writ the bishops were careful that no false books be counted in with the genuine collection which was left by the Apostles, and also that the original writings of the Apostles themselves be not injured or marred by heretics through the least addition or omission. And if a false teacher be found, his teachings were at once examined by the bishops, and they declared before the Church Universal that such and such a doctrine was not known to them, that they did not receive it from the Apostles, and that it did not agree with the doctrine of the Apostles. Heresy caused the gathering of local and general councils, in which the false teaching was compared with Holy Scripture and Tradition and then rejected. In the course of time the Apostolic Tradition, which was transmitted orally at first, was gradually, as the necessities of the Church demanded, committed to writing; and it is found in the works of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the first several centuries.

The principal dogmas of our religion are these: 1 -- The doctrine of God as He is in His Being; One God in substance, but in Three Persons; the Trinity consubstantial and undivided: the Father unoriginate, the Son begotten of the Father before all ages, and the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father. 2 -- The doctrine of the Son of God, as the Saviour of the human race; the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Son of God, Who was incarnate for our salvation of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Who suffered and died in the flesh, arose again, ascended

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into heaven, and shall come again to judge the living and the dead. 3—The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as the Sanctifier and perfecter of the salvation of mankind; that He is sent on earth by the Father and abides in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, preserves in her the Orthodox teaching of the faith unimpaired, and saves the faithful chiefly by means of the Holy Mysteries, regenerating, enlightening, edifying, and strengthening in the spiritual life. Upon these truths are founded also the other dogmas of the Christian religion, namely: that of the Mother of God, the veneration of the Saints, sacred images, the administration of the Church, *etc.*

We have learned that the true confession of faith by itself is not sufficient for salvation. Of necessity another condition is required: to belong to the Orthodox Church, and that is the recognition of a lawful hierarchy or priesthood, the reception of the Sacraments from the same hierarchy, and obedience to it in matters concerning salvation. In a community of Christians in which there is no lawful bishop, who is the dispenser of the gifts of saving grace, there are no sacramental gifts of the Holy Spirit, there can be no Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ; and where the Holy Spirit and Christ are not present, Who sacramentally abide in Christians, there can be, of course, no Church. Sacred Scripture testifies to this very decidedly.

Let us turn our attention to the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. What do we read there? At the time when a great persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem and the holy Archdeacon Stephen was stoned to death, then the Christians, excepting the Apostles, scattered in different places of Judea and Samaria. The Deacon Philip, who came into the city of Samaria, preached Christ there. The people with one heart gave heed to what Philip said, seeing the miracles which he worked; for the unclean spirits came out of many; some they left with wild cries, and many who were impotent or lame became whole. And there was great joy in that city. There was a man in that place, one Simon by name, who before this practiced sorcery and confounded the people of Samaria, giving himself out as someone great. Many followed him, saying that he had the power of God. But when they believed Philip, who spoke to them of the good tidings of the Kingdom of God and of the Name of Jesus Christ, they received baptism of him, both men and women. And so did Simon believe, and after being baptized he remained with Philip, and seeing the great powers and signs which were

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manifested, he wondered. The Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, having heard that Samaria received the word of God, sent to them Peter and John, who, having come, prayed over them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Upon seeing that, by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit was given, Simon brought them money, saying: Give me this power, that upon whomsoever I lay my hands the same will receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him: Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter.

From this history it can be seen that during the time of the Apostles there were grades in the hierarchy. Philip, who was one of the seven deacons, notwithstanding that he received grace for the office of deacon from the Apostles, notwithstanding that by the Holy Spirit, Who was with him, he performed many great works, yet he could not bring down the Holy Spirit on the Samaritans, whom he had baptized. But when the Apostles Peter and John had come they prayed and laid their hands upon them. Then the Holy Spirit came down upon them and was manifested in signs and miracles. The Apostles transmitted the power of conferring the Holy Spirit only to bishops. In other parts of the same book of the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus, and to Titus, the Bishop of Crete, there are plain statements pertaining to the grade or office of presbyter, which is a middle one, between the episcopate and diaconate.

Which hierarchy is the true and lawful one? It is the priesthood which has retained and continues to follow these conditions:

1. In the first place such a hierarchy is true, which has received the grace of the Holy Spirit from the Apostles themselves in an unbroken line of succession from one to another. If, for instance, in a certain locality bishops and priests were found to be wanting, the succession being broken, and in their absence the laity elected new ones and laid their hands upon them and proclaimed them to be bishops and presbyters, such a hierarchy would be unlawful and without grace, as the laity cannot transmit that which they do not possess themselves—the grace of the priesthood. In the time when the erring Church of Rome spawned the Protestant sects, the Protestants commenced to elect and establish presbyters themselves, and these ministers not only baptize, but they officiate at a so-called "communion service," which of course is not a valid sacrament, as the ministers have no apostolic ordination and are not presbyters.

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As we learn from history, only that hierarchy is authentic, which received the grace of the Priesthood from the Lord Jesus Christ's Apostles themselves, through an unbroken succession of the lawful heirs of this Sacrament. And this is necessary. As the inclination to sin is transmitted successively from one to another by inheritance in the conception and birth of the body, thus also grace, that is the power of God, which wipes away sin and gives strength in struggle with it, being bestowed, is transmitted uninterruptedly by the laying on of episcopal hands in the Priesthood, by anointing all Christians with the Holy Chrism, and also through sacred acts and visible forms in other Sacraments.

2. Secondly, an authentic hierarchy is such, which confesses all the truths of holy religion, for there are heresies which entirely deprive bishops and priests of their ministerial grace.

3. Thirdly, a Priesthood to be lawful must administer the Sacraments orderly, according to the rules of the Holy Church Catholic, not changing essential actions, as there are acts and conditions in the rites of Mysteries that are essential, without which a certain Sacrament may not be valid. Should a sacred minister violate an essential rule he is subject to degradation, if the violation has been intentional, or at least, the Mystery is void of power. The seventh rule of the Apostolic Canon enjoins: "Should anyone, bishop or presbyter, administer not three immersions in Baptism in commemoration of the death of the Lord, but one, let him be cast out." And those who were baptized by one immersion, it was ordered that they should be rebaptized. If a priest should consecrate chrism himself, and anoint the newly-baptized with it, such an act would not be the Mystery of unction with chrism, because it would be the usurpation of the rights and power of a bishop, and such a thing is forbidden presbyters by the sixth rule of the Council of Carthage. Should a bishop or priest use only water in place of wine in the Mystery of communion, as some heretics do, such an offering would not be a true Sacrament.

4. Fourthly, to be a lawful and true hierarchy, the same must be governed and govern its spiritual charge according to the rules of the Holy Apostles, the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and other laws which are accepted by the Orthodox Church in general. Having apostatized from these universal or catholic regulations, the Roman Church invented a doctrine concerning the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all.

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This has been one of the chief causes of the Roman schism or separation from the Orthodox Catholic Church.

5. A fifth condition necessary for proving the lawfulness of the Priesthood is its unity with the Orthodox Church in the spirit of peace and love. Whoever destroys this unity, except for a genuine and important cause, and bishops and priests together with Christians who follow them, that separate themselves from the higher Church authorities, are excommunicated from the Church, according to the rules of the Apostles and the canons of the Councils.

The Orthodox Church, which is one, is one spiritual body, animated only by the Holy Spirit, having only One Head--the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Church is holy, *not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing* (Ephes. 5:27). She sanctifies sinners by her teaching and sacraments.

The Orthodox Church is catholic, because she was organized by the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of all people in the whole world, and she is the gathering of all true believers in all places, times, and peoples.

The Orthodox Church will continue on earth until the Second Coming of Christ, "imperishable and not conquered by the powers of hell." In regard to holy doctrine, she is blameless and will ever remain unchangeable, as she has abiding in her the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Therefore she is, according to the Apostle, *the pillar and foundation of the Truth* (I Tim. 3:15). The existence of the lawful hierarchy and the administration of the Holy Mysteries will never cease in the Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said: *I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her*, and again: *Behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*. Therefore, it is the duty of Christians to obey the Church, for outside of her there is no salvation. *If thy brother neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican* (St. Math. 18:17), saith the Lord.

May God, Who is glorified in the Trinity, help us by His grace to become, through our membership in the Church Militant on earth, members of the Church Triumphant in heaven, that we may glorify His All-honorable and majestic Name with the angels and saints forever, without end. Amen.

ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

POPE PAUL VI IN NEW YORK

Perhaps no other event in recent history has been so clear a "sign of the times" as the visit to New York of Pope Paul VI, on Oct. 4 of this year, and his address there before the United Nations. For the world, first of all, it was a sign: the universal longing for "peace" has been given an unmistakeable "religious" sanction, and the age of "universal peace," the dream of generations of Utopian thinkers, has been brought almost within reach.

But what, one wonders, have Utopian dreams to do with Christianity? Did not Paul VI come to speak of and for Christianity? An examination of his address reveals a singular fact: the purpose of the Church of Christ is not mentioned, and the name of Christ appears in it only once, in an ambiguous final sentence. It is perhaps assumed that the audience knows for what the Pope stands; he said, indeed, "you know our mission." But later, when characterizing the "aspiration" of the Church of Rome, he said only that she wished to be "unique and universal" -- "in the spiritual field"!

For a single moment only in his address did it seem that the Pope might be about to speak a word of genuine Christianity. Citing the commandment of our Lord to His Disciples to "go and bring the good news to all peoples," the Pope

announced that he indeed had a "happy message" for "all peoples" represented at the United Nations. For Christians, this can mean only one thing: the good news of salvation, of eternal life in God. The Pope, however, had a different, an astonishing message: "We might call our message ... a solemn moral ratification of this lofty institution." This is what Rome offers today in place of the Christian Gospel!

Rome aspires to be "universal." But there is one universality of the true Church of Christ, which is called to preach the Gospel of salvation to every creature; and there is quite another universality that springs from the world and seeks to conform itself to that world by preaching another, more "acceptable" message. The very words of her Popes make it only too clear which of these Rome has chosen. Paul VI very accurately presumed in his address "to interpret the sentiments of the world." John XXIII before him had even more ingeniously justified his own program of "adaptation" to the modern world: "The voice of the times is the voice of God."

Thus speaks the voice of Rome, today even more than in ages past, in its aspiration to a "spiritual authority" over the entire world -- no longer over all Christians, but over men of every religion

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and of none. Paul VI in his address spoke no word of genuine Christianity; not once did his words rise above a merely worldly idealism. The Pope's ideals come not from our Lord, not from the Apostles and Fathers of the Church of Christ, but rather from the rationalist dreamers of the modern age who have revived the ancient heresy of chiliasm -- the dream of an earthly millenium. This heresy was explicit in the Pope's evocation of the "new age" of humanity, and of a "new history -- peaceful truly human history as promised by God to men of good will." The Church of Christ has never taught this strange doctrine; it is, however, one of the cardinal doctrines of Freemasonry, of occultism and numerous related sects, and even (without mention of God) of Marxism. For adopting this sectarian fantasy into the body of Latin doctrine the Pope was acclaimed by the press as a "prophet."

Involuntarily one calls to mind the last work of the 19th-century Russian philosopher, Vladimir Soloviev, -- the "Short Story of Antichrist" (from *Three Conversations*), in which, basing himself primarily on the Holy Fathers, he draws a chilling picture of Antichrist as a "great humanitarian" and superman, accepted by the whole world as Messiah.

This "Messiah" wins the world by writing a book, *The Open Way to Universal Peace and Prosperity*, which was "all-embracing and all-reconciling, combining noble reverence for ancient traditions and symbols with broad and bold radi-

calism in social and political demands... It brought a better future so tangibly within reach that everyone said: This is what we want... The wonderful writer carried all with him and was acceptable to everyone." Those who were concerned because the book did not once mention Christ were given the assurance that this was not necessary, since it was "permeated by the truly Christian spirit of active love and all-embracing benevolence." Swayed by the great man, an "International Assembly" was formed to create a world government; he was unanimously elected world ruler and issued a manifesto, proclaiming, "Peoples of the world! My Peace I give unto you. The ancient promises have been fulfilled; eternal and universal peace has been secured." Finally he calls an Ecumenical Council and unites all Churches under a Pope-magician who dazzles the multitudes with false miracles...

Such a picture is quite in harmony with the Orthodox teaching on Antichrist, who is indeed to come at the end of time to reign not (at first) by force but by *deception*, with a show of "goodness" that will deceive all those who, through the apostasy that precedes his coming, no longer will be able to distinguish Christ from Antichrist.¹

1. A number of Fathers, drawing chiefly from the Holy Scriptures, have discussed the Orthodox teaching on Antichrist in detail, among them St. Ephraim of Syria, St. John Chrysostom, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Hippolytus of Rome, and Blessed Augustine. Even in the Catholic Church the teaching is not entirely dead, as witness the recent defense of it by a Thomist, J. Pieper, *The End of Time*.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

The visit of Paul VI was received by at least a part of America emotionally, almost hysterically. One wonders: what was the purpose of a visit that could produce such an effect? One searches in vain for a rational purpose; the intent was simply, as the press put it, to "dramatize" the world's aspirations, which have become the Vatican's policy. Everything the Pope did and said was intended to appeal, not to reason, but to the emotions. Everyone was particularly struck by the Pope's expert use of gestures, which were more expressive than his words; and everywhere he went he was received with applause, cheers, whistling -- even in St. Patrick's Cathedral, for it has long been the Latin custom to applaud the Pope in church. If the Pope's visit was a great drama, he himself was received as a consummate actor.

Both the Pope's manner and the content of his address reveal a man in the state called by Orthodox ascetic writers *prelest*: spiritual self-deception.¹ Addressing the nations of the world, which find themselves in a state near anarchy and total moral collapse precisely because they have abandoned or will not receive the Christian Gospel, the Pope spoke no word of reproach, made no call to repentance, said nothing of Christian faith, gave no hint of the Christian message of salvation; he utilized rather a skillful combination of Utopian idealism and -- simple flattery. Addressing the unrepentant nations of the world -- including

1. See *The Orthodox Word* No. 4, p. 155.

many who are today persecuting and killing Christians -- the Pope could only "praise" and "congratulate" them, offer them "gratitude," "homage," and "tribute," and ended by giving them that which should be offered to God alone: "glory to you"!

Paul VI is not Antichrist; but in the whole "drama" in which he was the chief "actor" something of the seductiveness of Antichrist is already present. To be sure, it is nothing original with him; it is rather the culmination of centuries of apostasy, just as the enthusiastic response of the world was the result of a spiritual blindness, owing to ignorance of the nature of Christianity, which has been growing ever since the separation from the Christian East.

For Orthodox Christians, too, the Pope's visit was a sign: a sign that the times are even later than one might think. *When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* (St. Luke 18: 8.) Not a single public voice of criticism, in a "Christian" country, was raised against the religious "circus" which the Pope offered in place of the Christian Gospel. And it is futile to expect such a voice to be raised, in this age of apostasy, from any but one source: the Orthodox Church, the true Church of Christ in whose name the Popes presume, vainly, to speak. But alas, so advanced is the cancer of apostasy today that the "canonical" Orthodox bishops of America had front seats for the Pope's "performance", in defiance of

ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

the holy canons of the Church¹ and to the scandal of all right-believing Orthodox everywhere.

Confusion and ignorance of the most elementary truths prevail in the religious realm today. The multitudes run after false prophets, not because they firmly believe in their message, but because, often unknown to themselves, they are hungry for a spiritual food which they are not finding in the religious institu-

tions of the West. The Orthodox Church alone can satisfy this hunger -- not, however, by participating in the gatherings of those who spread religious confusion, but by standing apart and showing the world that there is another, a pure and genuine, Christianity; by confessing, straightforwardly and without adulteration, the Holy Orthodoxy of the Fathers and the Gospel of the Saviour.

MIRACULOUS APPARITION OF AN IMAGE IN GREECE

As reported by the newspaper *Vradini*, in the second half of last September, in the town of Vasiliki a strange event occurred in the house of a peasant. Stella, the daughter of the Greek Anastasios Pandaraka, was whitewashing a room. The lime had not yet dried when the girl noticed that some kind of image was being drawn on the wall. Fear took possession of her. She cried out in such a way that her father and brother came running into the room. What was wrong with her? In silence Stella pointed to the wall: on it there appeared an image of the head of the wonderworker, St. John the Russian.

Neighbors hastened to the house. The image was as distinct as if it had just been painted. All the villagers who gathered recognized it as that of St. John the Russian, who is deeply revered in Greece today, and whose relics repose in a church in the village of New-Prokopion, 105 miles from Athens, on Euboea Island.

1. Which forbid Orthodox clergy to pray together with heretics, in this case at a Catholic Mass. See above, page 168.

The mysterious apparition of the Saint could not but impress believers. Everyone expressed the feelings of his faith, of his zeal, in his own way: some whispered prayers with tears of joy, others stood on their knees, others gazed with devotion at the Saint who had thus miraculously appeared, meditating on God and His great mercies.

Anastasios Pandaraka's room became a place of worship. People from surrounding villages began to stream to it. Generous contributions of money began to pour in. A committee was formed, presided over by the local priest, to keep account of the freewill offerings. Soon His Eminence Gregory, Metrop. of Chalkida, came. Having acquainted himself on the spot with the miraculous occurrence, he acknowledged it as a miracle, blessed the priest to continue his accounting of contributions, and commissioned a committee at the place to build a small church.

Sergey Vyazemsky.

Orthodox Russia, Oct. 28, 1965

NEW BOOKS

THE SPIRITUAL FACE OF SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT, by Archimandrite Konstantin. Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N. Y., 1964. 59 pp.

Just as St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain was sent by God as an antithesis to the atheistic "Age of Reason," so a century later did the great prophet, St. John of Kronstadt, appear as a living, holy witness of God's Truth in the face of the growing godlessness that was to produce the Russian Revolution. Historically St. John was the culmination of Russia's richest hagiographical era, the 19th century; and now, canonized, he presents his "spiritual face" alike to the New World, where, if only it be the will of God, a whole generation may yet be inspired by his sanctity to receive the teaching and live the life of true Orthodoxy.

On no other Orthodox saint is there such a wealth of factual material. Cases of striking clairvoyance and prophecy, and literally thousands of miracles, both during his life and after, have been recorded; it has been remarked that, considering the density of modern population and the immense size of St. John's flock, the miracles of St. John even sur-

pass in number those of St. Nicholas, the greatest Saint of all Christendom. Nonetheless, there is extremely little on St. John in English. The present book fills an important part of this gap. It is a masterful compilation of vivid narratives of people who saw the Saint in various circumstances and experienced the spiritual power of Divine grace in him. The book serves as an excellent introduction to the whole phenomenon of St. John.

Something, of course, has been lost in translation; much of the reality of Russian life at the turn of the century, and the whole tempo of the life of that time, can hardly be understood by Americans today. Perhaps it will be an important function of this precious book to inspire some young theologian to undertake a thorough study of St. John in English. Perhaps, as a result of such a holy undertaking, the author might himself experience the odor of sanctity that is present in everything St. John did and said.

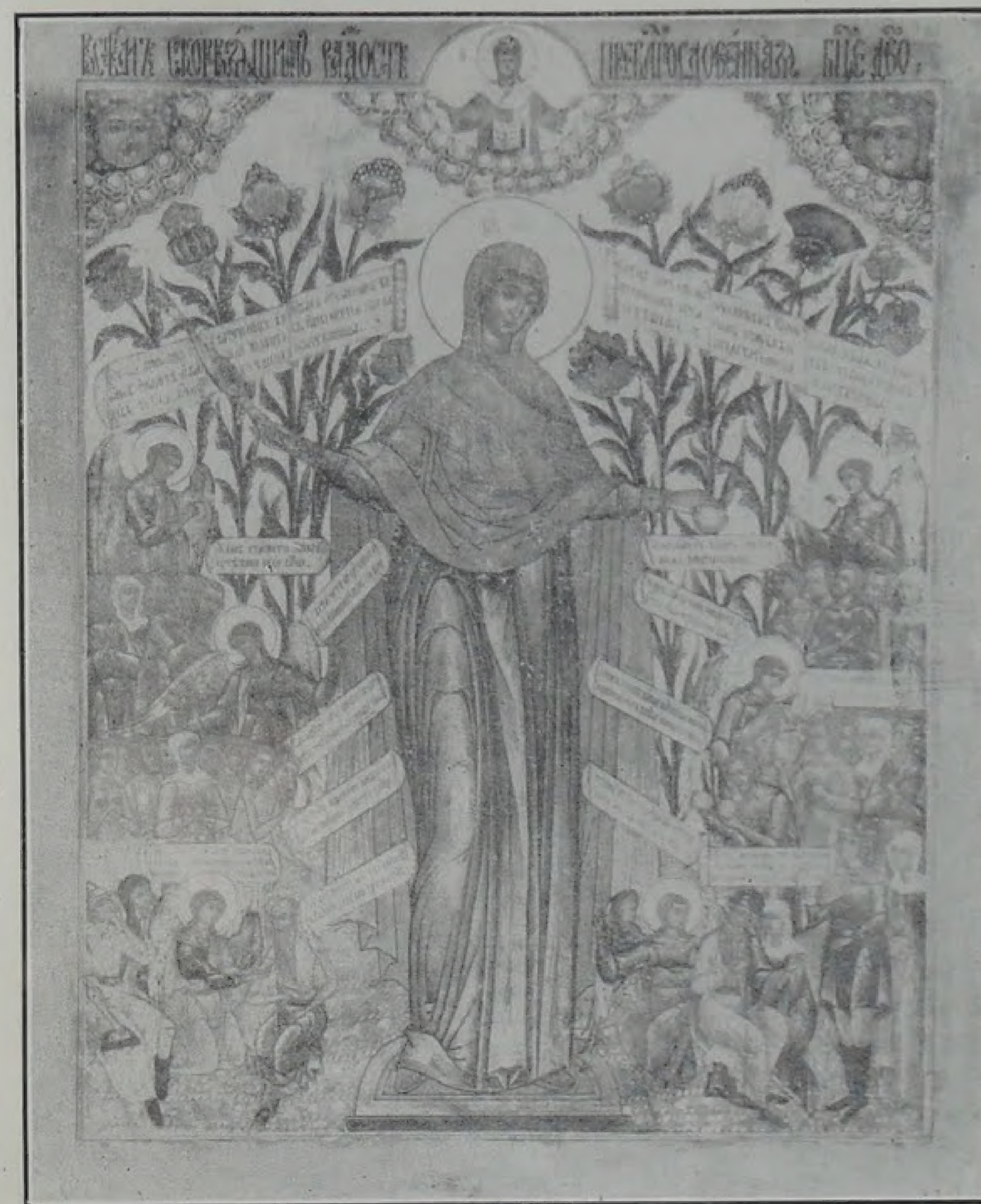
Gleb Podmoshensky.

The book reviewed here may be purchased from ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN BOOKS & ICONS for \$.75.

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